

APPLICATION MADE FOR: Northeast Prosperity Region 3 DATE: October 1, 2013
(NAME of REGION)

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION:

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

YEAR INCORPORATED: 1981

ADDRESS: (include street address if different)

80 Livingston Blvd, U-108

PO Box 457

Gaylord, MI 49734

Is the name above the same as
it appears on the IRS Letter of
Determination? Yes ☒ No ☐

If not, explain: _____

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S NAME & TITLE: Diane Rekowski, Executive Director

CONTACT'S NAME & TITLE (if different): _____

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: 989-705-3734

EMAIL ADDRESS: drekowski@nemcog.org

NUMBER OF FTE POSITIONS: 10

OPERATING BUDGET TOTAL FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

Fiscal Year: October 1 September 30
From To

SOURCES OF INCOME:

Government	Federal	<u>26.4%</u>	Fees/Earned Income	_____ %
	State	<u>53.4%</u>	Individual Contributions	_____ %
	County	<u>10.5%</u>	Corporate and/or Foundation Grants	_____ %
	City/Township/Village	<u>9.7%</u>	Special Events	_____ %
			Memberships	_____ %
			Other	_____ %

Are you applying for (check one of the following):

Regional Prosperity Collaborative ☒ (TIER ONE) Regional Prosperity Council ☐ (TIER TWO) Regional Prosperity Board ☐ (TIER THREE)

Are you applying for funds to complete a feasibility study for the purpose of developing a strategy to move to a different tier (check one of the following):

YES ☒

NO ☐

REGIONAL FUNDING APPLICATION

Northeast MI Prosperity Region

1. **WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF YOUR FUNDING REQUEST? PLEASE PROVIDE AN ITEMIZED LIST OF WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO WITH THAT FUNDING. INCLUDE A TIMELINE, INFORMATION ABOUT ANY FUNDS YOU WILL PLAN TO LEVERAGE IN YOUR EFFORT AND HOW YOU INTEND TO MEASURE SUCCESS.**

A. Funding Request: \$250,000 for Phase One: Five-Year Regional Prosperity Plan. \$75,000 to transform to Prosperity Council. Total: \$325,000.

\$250,000: This funding will be used to provide the lead agency(NEMCOG) of the 11-county region with the administrative and technical staff support for the overall project, Consultant(s) to complete tasks and the development of the Plan, travel, meeting expenses, and other direct costs that may be associated with the Phase One: NE MI Regional 5-Year Prosperity Plan.

\$75,000: Funding will be used to complete a feasibility study and process mapping to produce a plan to transform the Region 3 Prosperity Collaborative into a Regional Prosperity Council.

B. Itemized List of Program Activities (Please see attached Timeline and Measure of Success Chart for each of the tasks.)

Northeast MI Region 3 through the MI Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Collaborative Development Council (CDC) has been engaged in the implementation of aspects of the regions economic and community development growth strategies developed in conjunction with MSU Land Policy Institute (LPI) in 2010. The Growth Strategies were integrated into the NEMCOG's regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) with an annual work plan developed from this since this time. In 2013, the Northeast MI Council of Governments (NEMCOG) was identified by MEDC as the Convener for the newly created Collaborative Development Council (CDC) Regions (Region 3 CDC, 11 counties) which added 3 additional counties to the region. The CDC's composition includes many of the members of the traditional regional economic development committee as well as expanded membership of the 3 additional counties and includes the following: Economic Development Organizations, Workforce Development Boards, colleges, state departments, SBTDC representatives, Chambers, Tourism Bureaus, lending institution: Northern Initiatives, businesses, and local governments. The meetings are inclusive, opened to those willing to assist in the effort of community and economic development growth in the region. A regional work plan approved by Region 3 CDC was developed and submitted to MEDC for consideration of funding. A portion of the request was funded by MEDC, USDA, and EDA and has allowed for regional initiatives to be commenced: Tourism Cluster: Up North Trails Collaborative Website; Regional Marketing equipment, familiarization tour for MEDC Executives, Salesforce software for partners, completion of Northeast MI Business Connections

website, Business Pitch Night, and Kitchen Incubator equipment purchase. These efforts have been felt to be foundational needs in the region from which economic opportunities can develop.

The Phase One: Northeast MI Prosperity 5-Year Plan will build upon the regional CEDS integrating and aligning Workforce Development , Higher Education, Adult Education and Transportation with community and economic development strategies. The following itemized tasks will be completed.

1. Regional Structure Formation: Northeast MI Prosperity Collaborative

NEMCOG will organize and convene monthly meetings of the Northeast MI Region 3 Prosperity Collaborative.

The following Tasks will be completed:

- 1a. Identify and recruit additional key stakeholders critical to lead the Prosperity Collaborative forward; i.e., business owners, foundations.
- 1b. Prepare and disseminate monthly agendas, minutes, project tracking updates, financials.
- 1c. Due to the expansive area that Region 3 covers, develop an alternate means of convening meetings via HD videoconferencing capability (University Center-Gaylord and some community colleges in region have capability –will determine other sites at ISD’s etc. that may also offer service).
- 1d. Formalize Prosperity Collaborative operating procedures to include transparency , and timeliness of posting of materials for public review.
- 1e. Enhance NEMCOG’s website to provide a site to upload monthly, all meeting information and materials.
- 1f. Provide monthly updates (information/newsletters) of Region 3 Prosperity Collaborative activities.
- 1g. Appoint subcommittee(s) to identify staffing, approve RFP’s/RFQ’s, select and approve Consultants.

2. Define NE MI Regional Vision (Brand)

Regional Issue: Northeast MI has not effectively communicated a shared vision that can distinguish itself in the global economy. Although Sub-regional efforts are underway: Coastal Counties: Underwater Sanctuary & US-23 Heritage Route; Interior Counties: Trail-town/Up North Trails; I-75 Counties: Gaylord area: Golf Mecca/Alpine Town. If the region is going to communicate as one and effectively market for tourism and attraction for new business development as a place to live, work & play, there needs to be a defined vision and branding effort from which communities can all unite around.

The following Tasks will be completed:

- 2a. Review/analyze existing community vision statements and branding efforts within the Sub- regions: Coastal: NOAA/US-23, Sunrise Side; Interior counties:

Up North Trail Initiative, Elk Country; I-75 Counties: Golf Mecca, Alpine, Lakes & Rivers Themes including cultural /heritage.

- 2b. Provide a conceptual Vision Statement of Region.
- 2c. Attain consensus of Vision Statement for Region.
- 2d. Develop regional brand/logo.
- 2e. Select through preferential surveys and consensus of Northeast Prosperity Region's partners.
- 2f. Provide schematic design-work samples for brochures, websites, community gateways, façade, etc. for community/organization implementation.
- 2g. Promote reason/benefits for a regional identity and grow support for adoption of brand.
- 2h. Develop and print regional materials.

3. Regional Community & Economic Development Assistance Strategy

Regional Issue: Professional Economic Development assistance is not available throughout region. This is due primarily to funding capacity and a lack of collaborative programming. There are 11 counties in the Northeast region with 4 fulltime professional staff, 2 part-time and 5 counties with volunteer or 0 paid staff. NEMCOG through its Economic Development Designation (EDD) and Economic Development Administration (EDA) assistance provides local assistance with community and economic development activities in the region; however the funding level is very insufficient to address the entire region's needs.

In order to improve upon the region's economic prosperity it is imperative that the current economic development delivery system is analyzed to determine a cost-effective means for professional staffing and financing in the 11-county region. The analysis will include a review of all current economic development organization's structures, functions, staffing, staffing duties and coverage area. A Recommended Strategy will be developed that also takes into account economic and community development needs of local communities.

The following Tasks will be completed:

- 3a. Inventory economic and community development organization's services, funding mechanism and delivery area.
- 3b. Identify gaps, strengths, opportunities.
- 3c. Develop regional retention strategy.
- 3d. Develop regional attraction strategy.
- 3e. Develop a collaborative work plan that is inclusive of all economic development service providers.
- 3f. Determine a collaborative means of financing the regional/subregional approach.
- 3g. Convene a summit of EDC's/EDO's and Region 3 Prosperity Collaborative to review findings and recommended strategy and steps to implementation.
- 3h. Revise strategy based on summit feedback.

3i. Adoption of finalized strategy (subregional/regional).

4. Define Regional Chamber of Commerce Five-Year Collaborative Strategy

Regional Issue: Chambers of Commerce can provide critical support services to their community businesses. In many of the rural communities the supporting services that Chambers can offer are extremely limited due to the lack of financial support. Developing a collaborative strategy with Chambers throughout the region will strengthen each through a collective approach that adds value to their member base as well as to the region as a whole.

The following tasks will be accomplished:

- 4a. Review & analyze existing structure and services of Chambers throughout the region.
- 4b. Inventory all Chambers in region: identify value propositions of each, identify similarities.
- 4c. Organize summit meetings to review analysis, identify gaps and opportunities.
- 4d. Define areas for regional collaboration and action tasks.
- 4e. Develop a 5-year collaborative strategy for Chambers.

5. Define Regional Visitors & Convention Bureau' Five-Year Collaborative Strategy

Regional Issue: Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) provide local and national/international tourism marketing services. In many of the rural communities the supporting services that CVB's can offer are extremely limited due to the lack of minimal base support from which their funding is derived. Developing a collaborative strategy with CVB's throughout the region will allow for realization that each can be strengthened through a collective approach ultimately enhancing the tourism cluster.

The following tasks will be accomplished:

- 5a. Review & analyze existing CVB service delivery system.
- 5b. Organize and hold regional CVB summit(s) to review analysis, identify gaps, and explore collaborative opportunities.
- 5c. Develop a 5-year regional/sub regional strategy.

**6. Retooling the Region's Workforce & Educating our Future Workforce Strategy
Workforce Development /Higher Education /Adult Education**

Regional Issue: A coordinated approach is necessary to break down the silos of workforce preparedness including adult, education higher education and workforce training to ensure Talent at all levels is being equipped for the occupational opportunities within the region's target industries including entrepreneurship as a career option.

The following tasks will be accomplished:

- 6a. Convene Northeast MI's adult education, higher education and workforce training organizations and institutions for development of a Five-Year Talent Strategy.
- 6b. Informed by the Regional Economic and Community Development Plan and workplan (Region 3 CDC) and based on the target industry sector needs in the workplace, inventory the following:
 - *higher educational and career readiness offerings in the region;
 - *adult education and workforce readiness offerings in region;
 - *certificates and degrees;
 - *marketing and recruitment efforts in region;
 - *funding sources;
- 6c. Determine strengths, weaknesses (gaps) and opportunities of the educational and training delivery system in the region.
- 6d. Provide recommendations to Talent group (subcommittee of Collaboration) for input and strategy development for alignment and collaborations to enhance education/training.
- 6e. Develop a talent retention plan.
- 6f. Develop a formalized collaborative 5-year strategy among all education and training entities

7. Enhancing Transportation Connections Strategy

Regional Issue: Northeast MI has had a longstanding issue with transportation to the workplace as well as higher education and training centers due to the rural nature of the region. Although regional transit opportunities do exist in the region, the routes do not necessarily coincide with workplace or educational needs. The Talent committee will be involved in the development of this strategy.

The following tasks will be accomplished:

- 7a. Analyze existing transit agencies operations and route systems.
- 7b. Define workplace transportation needs.
- 7c. Define higher-educational transportation needs.
- 7d. Develop scenarios that include routes to regional work centers, routes to higher education facilities/training facilities and budgetary costs.
- 7e. Organize regional meeting(s) of transit providers to develop a collaborative approach and coordinated approach for transit in region.
- 7f. Determine 5-year strategy.

8. Community Development Regional Placemaking Strategy

Many efforts to enhance small towns in the region are underway, i.e. Up North Trail-Town Initiative, US-23 Heritage Route, Underwater Marine Sanctuary. Tying the regional vision/brand into the various placemaking efforts will be paramount to securing a regional identity in the state/national/global marketplace

The following tasks will be accomplished:

- 8a. Based on community placemaking activities underway and integrating regional vision/logo, develop schematic designs and recommendations that ties the region together i.e.: way-finding signs, community gateways, etc.
- 8b. Organize Placemaking Summit to inform and educate communities on activities occurring in region (Up North, U3-23 Heritage Route, Sanctuary, DDA programs, etc. as well as placemaking opportunities.
- 8c. Integrate indigenous arts and culture in local communities' placemaking efforts.
- 8d. Develop 5-year strategy.

9. Develop Five-Year Economic Development Strategy

NEMCOG facilitated the creation of the Region 3 CDC - a collaborative group with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and representation from eleven northeast Michigan counties specifically addressing economic development issues in this region. Over the past year, Region 3 CDC developed a regional work plan that identified needs of the following clusters: Tourism, Manufacturing, Wood Products Industry, Agricultural & Food Products, Innovation & Entrepreneurship. For each of these a work plan was developed and funding was obtained to implement small portions of the work program.

A five-year strategy will be developed that is inclusive of Talent needs and is focused on the clusters identified for the region:

- A. Regional Wood Industry Cluster
- B. Regional Value-added Agricultural & Food Products Cluster
- C. Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Regional Strategy
- D. Innovation & Entrepreneurial (I&E) Development Cluster
- E. Regional Tourism Cluster Strategy
- F. Regional Manufacturing Strategy
- G. Regional Aerospace Strategy

10. Develop Performance Dashboard & Measurable Annual Goals

Develop a Performance dashboard that is integrated into the 5-year Plan and reported annually to the Northeast MI Prosperity Region's Collaborative/Council and made available to the private and public sector.

11. Compile, Integrate, and Complete Phase One: Northeast MI Regional Five-year Prosperity Plan

Integrate the outcomes of Itemized tasks 1-9, draft and Finalize Phase One: Northeast Michigan's 5-Year economic development blueprint with performance dashboard and measurable annual goals. The plan will provide a coordinated approach that builds upon the connections between higher education, adult education, workforce development agencies, economic and transportation organizations in the region. The plan once reviewed and revised by the Northeast Collaborative, will be adopted by the Northeast Regional Prosperity Collaborative.

12. Transform Northeast MI Prosperity Collaborative to Regional Prosperity Council

A feasibility study and process mapping will be completed by a qualified consultant to develop a plan for the Northeast Region Prosperity Collaborative to transform to a Regional Prosperity Council.

***see attached chart for Timeline and Measures of Success**

Leveraged funds: NEMCOG will provide leveraged funds for the Plan development. EDA funds will support: demographics, GIS, community and economic development strategy development.

MI Department of Transportation (MDOT): Planning funds will be leveraged to assist in the transportation strategy development. This will include technical assistance (GIS support, data, strategy development).

MEDC: Possible CDC funds will be leveraged. This will be dependent upon the CDC FY 2014 workplan and subsequent funding provided.

Estimated leveraged funds are minimally \$60,000, however could exceed this dependent on FY 2014 funding outcomes.

2. LIST PARTNERS PARTICIPATING IN THIS APPLICATION (*denotes required partners)

The following Partners are participating in this initiative: *Economic Development Alliance for Oscoda County, *Presque Isle County Road Commission – Rural Task Force, *University Center Gaylord, Burleigh Township, Wilber Township, Iosco County Board of Commissioners, *Target Alpena, *University Center Gaylord – Adult Ed-GED Testing Site, City of Harrisville, *Region 7B Consortium MI Works!, East Tawas Business Association, *Develop Iosco, First Merit Bank, Tawas Area Chamber of Commerce, *Alpena Community College, *North Central Michigan College, Iosco County Michigan State University Extension, Huron Pines Resource Conservation & Development Council, *Roscommon County Economic Development Corporation, *Northeast Michigan Consortium, Atlanta Area Tourism Council, *Otsego County Economic Alliance, Village of Hillman, *Moran Iron Works, Inc. Alabaster Township, City of East Tawas, *West Branch-Rose City Area Schools, *ACES Academy, *Kirtland Community College, *M-Tech Center, *Houghton Lake Alternative and Community Education, *Presque Isle County Development Commission, *Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, NOAA Underwater Marine Sanctuary .

Prospective partners to be approached are additional key employers and community foundations in the region.

3. ARE THE PROPOSED COUNTIES TO BE SERVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGIONAL PROSPERITY MAP?

Yes, this Prosperity Alliance (CDC Region 3) covers all 11 counties.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Strategies that were identified through the 2010 LPI Initiative include the following:

Regional Strategy: Diversifying and Globally Connecting Business

Regional Strategy: Marketing Region

Regional Strategy: Business Assistance/Acceleration/Attraction

Regional Strategy: Retooling the Region's Workforce & Educating our Future Workforce

Regional Strategy: Optimizing Infrastructure Investment

Regional Strategy: Strengthening Quality Place

Regional Strategy: Seizing Green Opportunities

Each of the clusters listed above for strategy development fall within one of the above strategies.

TIMELINE & MEASURE OF SUCCESS

[illegible]

Task	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
3. Regional Community & Economic Development Strategy									
a. Inventory services	x								
b. Identify gaps, strengths, opportunities.		x							
c. & d. Develop attraction & Retention strategy			x						
e. Collaborative Work Plan			x	x					
f. Financing Strategy				x	x				
g. Summit/roundtable					x				
h. Revise strategy					x				
i. Adopt strategy						x			
Measure of Success 1. Agreed upon regional delivery. 2. Workplan that aligns services. 3. MOA with EDO's									
4. Regional Chamber Strategy	x	x	x						
a. Inventory current delivery systems		x							
b. Summit			x						
c. Define collaboration			x						
d. Develop 5-year strategy				x					
Measure of Success 1. Collaboration between chambers. 2. 5-year strategy developed.									
Task 5. Regional Visitors and Convention Bureaus		x							
a. Inventory current delivery systems			x						

Task	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
b. Summit			x						
c. Define areas for collaboration			x						
d. Develop 5-year Strategy				x					
Measure of Success 1. Collaboration between CVB's. 2. Strategy is developed.									
6. Workforce Development/Higher Ed Strategy									
a. Convene meetings	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
b. Inventory		x	x						
c. SWOT			x	x					
d. Recommendations				x	x				
e. Talent retention plan					x	x			
f. 5-year strategy.						x	x		
Measure of Success 1. Educational/training offerings are aligned with workplace needs. 2. Talent Retention plan is developed. 3. 5-Year strategy is adopted.									
7. Transportation									
a. Analyze	x	x							
b. Workplace Needs		x							
c. Higher-Ed Needs			x						
d. Scenarios				x	x				
e. Meeting w/Talent reps			x		x				
f. 5-Year Strategy						x	x		
Measure of Success 1. Transit agencies agree to a collaborative strategy.									
8. Regional Place-making Strategy									
a. Recommendations & designs				x	x	x			

[illegible]

NARRATIVE

1. LEAD APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The Northeast MI Regional Prosperity Initiative titled: “Collaborate –Coordinate-Execute” will be administered by the Northeast MI Council of Governments (NEMCOG) in coordination with the Northeast MI Consortium and collaborating partners. NEMCOG, as the regional planning agency, has extensive experience, over 45 years, in grant administration; community plan(s) development and implementation, as well as group facilitation (most recently designated as the MEDC Region 3 Convener) and provides problem solving and networking assistance to its constituents.

NEMCOG’s mission is to facilitate the development of intergovernmental cooperation and coordination within the eight counties of the northeast region. NEMCOG provides for controlled growth policy, to preserve and improve the environment, to pursue greater efficiency and responsibilities of local units of government, and to improve their ecological, social, and economic well- being.

The Northeast Michigan Council of Governments is fortunate to have a very skilled and dedicated staff of seven full-time professionals and 3 part-time staff (Community Corrections). Staff expertise runs from professional AICP Planner, Economic and Community Development Expertise, Zoning Specialist, Transportation Planner, GIS proficiency, Website Coordinator & Maintenance, Water Resource Programs Specialist:, Watershed Protection and Enhancement expertise, and Graphic Design expertise. NEMCOG maintains a CPA Accountant and annually has an Independent Audit.

The Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) has been an EDA funded Economic Development District for 45 years. NEMCOG has and continues to provide programs in a number of areas including economic and community development, environmental quality, transportation, land use, recreation, community corrections, as well as providing services such as digital mapping, grant preparation and data dissemination. Over the course of its 45 year history, NEMCOG has spearheaded the annual update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This document is prepared in cooperation with representatives of the eight county NEMCOG Region and is the only Region-wide economic planning process undertaken in Northeast MI. In addition, NEMCOG has over it history and continuously secured funding for many large-scale planning and implementation projects all of which have been successfully completed and ranging from fairly straight forward projects to very complex projects involving partners providing technical assistance as well as consultants.

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments' Board is organized and governed under its original 8 county-region designation. The Governing Board is comprised of 21 representatives from both the private sector and public sector (county commissioners, city and village officials and staff and township board supervisors) from each of the Region's eight counties. The Governing Board meets 10 times per year (excludes November and July) with the General Membership (all member municipalities and organizations) twice per year.

In addition, NEMCOG serves as the Convener of the MEDC Region 3 Collaborative Development Council (CDC). This relatively new 11-County Economic Development Collaborative, named the Northeast MI Regional Prosperity Alliance was formed in collaboration with all the EDC's in the 11-county region, Work Force Development organizations, SBTDC, Colleges, and State Departments along with many related organizations and agencies.. NEMCOG has integrated its regional Economic Development activities, such as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) into the Region 3 CDC responsibilities. The Region 3 CDC acts as advisory to the NEMCOG Board in terms of the CEDS process as well as other economic development related program work such as the regional growth strategies and work plan for the CDC.

Finally, NEMCOG provides fiduciary responsibilities to its members as well as technical support to groups and organizations in the region. Some collaborative program and fiduciary assistance NEMCOG provides support to include: Huron Shores Pure MI Coalition, US-23 Management Council, UP North Trails Collaborative, Alpena Recycling Program; NE MI Regional Broadband Authority. Due to the collaborations, a cost-effective means for program operation has been achieved. In addition, NEMCOG provides transparency of its financial responsibilities through monthly Governing Board reviews and annual audits.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF REGIONAL ASSETS

Northeast MI Prosperity Region (3) is located in the northeastern portion of the Lower Peninsula and is comprised of 11 counties with a population of 205,830 (2012). The region is rural in nature representing a little over 2 percent of the state's population. Well renowned for its high quality lakes, rivers, streams and vast expanses of forest lands the region attracts thousands of tourists and seasonal residents per year. Natural resources are at the root of northern Michigan's identity. Both residents and visitors alike list surface water as one of the top assets that add to the overall quality of life. The region provides unique recreational opportunities, natural wildlife settings, and fisheries resources due to its combination of high quality water, great expanses of water courses and forested areas, and accessibility of within a one-day drive to as much as 25 percent of the population of the United States.

The Region's population experienced a 4.5% decline between 2000 and 2012 resulting in a loss of 9,703. A combination of natural population decline and outmigration contributed to the losses. In 2012, statistics show that 42% of the residents in Region 3 s are 55 or older- at or near retirement age- indicating a much older population than that of the state wide average. The younger working age population (15 to 24 and 25 to 34) account for only 18.8%. Economic and workforce implications for the region, if this trend continues, indicates possible talent shortages resulting from retirements, and an increased demand for health services without a labor pool to draw from.

Region 3 also lags behind the state averages in higher education with only 14% holding Bachelor Degrees or higher, although 32 % of the residents do indicate some college or an Associate's Degree.

The labor force data indicates there are 84,900 labor market participants in Region 3. Since 2009 the labor force in the region experienced a 7.6% or 7,010 decline. This downward trend is beginning to experience a reversal as shown from July 2012 to July 2013 an increase of 760 in the region's labor force.

The unemployed in the Region's labor force has remained consistently high since the Great Economic Recession. Regional unemployment remains at 12.2% (2013) with much higher rates in some of the counties and consistently higher than the state and national averages.

Green infrastructure assets are the basis for the economy. These assets provide forest natural resources and along with Blue infrastructure (lakes, rivers), tremendous tourist and recreation opportunities. Major natural assets were identified in 2010 during public input sessions and include: Forests (Federal and State), Farmland, Minerals and Quarries, Great Lakes (Lake Huron), high quality inland lakes (In land Water way), rivers (National Wild and Scenic), streams (Blue-Ribbon Trout streams, scenic beauty, wide-open spaces, clean air, clean water, wetlands, hunting & fishing, NOAA Underwater Marine Sanctuary, sinkholes, and Lake Huron Blueways System. Infrastructure assets include Hospitals, University Center-Gaylord -Eight Colleges, M-Tech Facility, 4 community colleges, Deep-water ports, Marinas, Dams and electric power plants, rail connections, US-23, US 127, I-75 and state highways, trail systems, municipal water and sewer, small industrial parks, general Aviation airports (aerospace), oil and gas facilities, extensive cellular network, and growing broadband fiber infrastructure.

As of 2012, according to the DTMB Labor Market Information, 65% of the Region's jobs are concentrated in the following: Accommodation and Food Service (6001 jobs), Health care and Social assistance (8344 jobs), Public Administration (12,136 jobs) and Retail Trade (10,832 jobs).

The forest resources in the region present opportunities for development of forest products facilities such as sawmills energy production facilities, and manufacturing facilities. Timber harvesting is concentrated on five timber types: aspen, jack pine, oak, red pine, and upland hardwoods.

Agriculture is important to the local economy and is part of the lifestyle of many long-term residents of the region. The presence of farmland is also an integral part of the rural landscape. According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture 2009 Report, agriculture production accounted for \$67,772,000 in the region. Local foods and food production is showing an increase in interest in the region with new farm markets and new food production facilities taking hold in the region.

Manufacturing provides significant employment in Machinery manufacturing, and Transportation equipment manufacturing in the region with impressive job gains since 2009.

Tourism is a critical component of the region's economy with many small businesses scattered around the region. Between retail trade, accommodations and food services, there are over 16,000 related jobs in the region.

3. NEEDS STATEMENT

Chronic and persistence unemployment, high poverty rates and low educational attainment has plagued the region for many decades. The recent Great Recession added to the region's downward trend of the economy spurring organizations and agencies in northeast MI to come together to enable a meaningful response to the economic distress. Parallel to this, the State of MI initiated new efforts and through MEDC created 10 Economic Development Collaborative (CDC) regions in the state providing northeast MI the platform from which to guide its collaborative response to the economic crisis. Also within this period NEMCOG, in coordination with the MSU Land Policy Institute (LPI), developed Regional Economic Development Growth Strategies for its eight member counties. The subsequent launching of MEDC's Collaborative Development Council (CDC) and NEMCOG named the Convener for Region 3 CDC (11-counties) led to an effort that launched targeted regional measures that support sustainable economic growth.

The regional growth strategies were integrated into the Northeast MI's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) from which a work-plan for Region 3 CDC (11 counties) was subsequently developed and submitted to MEDC and other sources for funding. This has resulted in limited funding of priority tasks being implemented within specific target clusters. Some of the projects that were initiated and their outcomes include: Up North Trails Collaborative Initiative involving mapping of assets, website development, and trail town place-making activities; Wood Industry Value-added Marketing Plan from which a collaboration between wood companies was established ; a highly publicized Furniture Design Contest between students in the Furniture School of the Kendall School of Design has resulted in northeast MI wood companies now in the prototype development phase (Judges in the Contest were Executives in Gardner White, Slumberland, Silver Co. and two northeast MI Wood companies); a NE MI Business Connections Website completed f; Regional Kitchen Incubator established, Regional Marketing initiated; Salesforce software purchased and utilized by service providers, and the 1st regional Business Pitch Night held.

Northeast Michigan is positioned to move progressively forward to truly make a difference in the manner that organizations and public entities have traditionally delivered services to its constituents. The Collaborative partners, from all sectors understand the need for an integrated and informed approach to lead the way to regional economic prosperity. Collaboration has been in many instances a way of life in a rural area. However, often due to the region's vast land area there has been difficulty in bringing stakeholders together. This project will also importantly create a new meeting forum with the utilization of high definition videoconferencing. A new paradigm is necessary for more effective Economic and Talent service delivery, and collaborations more critical as local, state and federal resources become increasingly scarce. Funding this proposal will provide the NE MI Regional Collaborative with the resources needed to create the new pathway to Sustainable Regional Economic Prosperity critical to the present and future generations of northeast MI.